

A  
LETTER<sup>10</sup>  
TO A  
FRIEND:  
WITH

Two POEMS sacred to the Memory of the  
late R. R. Dr. THOMAS RATTRAY of Craig-  
hall, Bishop of Edinburgh. K

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*Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit :*  
*Nulli flebilior quam — — — — —* Hor.

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Two DORMS (see also to type  
of H. R. D. THOMAS)  
1800



# ( 8 )

## A LETTER, &c.

JUNE 28<sup>th</sup>, 1743.

*My dear Friend,*

Am sensible you'll be surprized at my Negligence, in not writing you sooner in Return to the Subject of your last. I own, I was under a great many Obligations to have satisfied your Desires long before this Time, but still have been interrupted by pressing Business. The several Duties of my Office, particularly that weekly Fatigue we must all struggle with of sermonizing, have lately so engaged my Attention, that, I hope, these will be sufficient to apologize for this Delay, which I acknowledge has been too tedious.

BESIDES, the Subject was such, and my Muse crept so low with repeated Toil, that it was some time before I could rouze her to the Thoughts of such an arduous Attempt. However, animated with a hearty Inclination to gratify a Friend in his Request, how laborious and difficult soever, I dar'd at last to set my Hand to the Work, unworthy indeed by far of the noble Hero; but (poor as it is) the best you can expect from my Quarter.

IT was with no small Reluctance I could allow myself to attempt the great Bishop *RATTRAY*'s Character, especially as I had the Misfortune to be an entire Stranger to it, save only what I had by your Information, and the general good Fame of Him among all sincere Lovers of neglected Truth and despised Right: These were, you

will readily own, but weak Foundations to raise the Structure of a Poem upon. — But why do I now complain? The Task is ended; and, I hope, you'll accept of it, such as it is, instead of better. Let the Fate of it be at your Determination. — Either conceal or publish. — Only be so good as to determine nothing for or against the Child, without speedily acquainting the Parent of the Event.

FOR some time I pensively look'd about me, to see if some bright Genius would appear to sing the Praises of the wond'rous good Man: But, much to my Surprize and Disappointment, not a single Sentence has been publish'd, to do Justice, and to provoke Imitation. — Strange and unaccountable! — What? Is there not a Cause, thought I? — A Cause, to be sure, as noble and sublime as it is affecting! — Pity it was, when the truly valuable Dr. *RATTRAY* left this World of Misery and Woe, to find our News-papers barely telling the Publick, *He is dead*, without so much as aiming at some short Character of Him, such as his distinguishing Merit justly challenged.

PROMPTED therefore by your pressing Solicitations, and stir'd with Indignation at the shameful Silence of an unthinking Age, poor I, at last, was forced to lift my trembling Hand, to strike out some rough Accents of Grief to weep the general Loss. Did my Capacity bear the smallest Proportion to my Inclination, I might have said a thousand Things about the admirable Qualities and intellectual Capacities of that *great and good Man*, whose Memory, I hope, shall ever be blessed among us.

WISHING you every Thing that is agreeable, I am  
in Sincerity, &c.

*In mortem lugendi admodum Præfusis,*  
*Rev*diffimi* THOMÆ RATTRÆI*  
*De CRAIGHALL, S. Th. D.*

*EDINBURGENSIUM Episcopi,*

Qui, Sole ascendente, Maii 12. Die Ascensionis Domini-  
 nicæ, Anno 1743, obiit.

*Ille quidem plenus annis abiit, plenus virtutibus, plenus honori-  
 bus, illis etiam quos recusavit: nobis tamen querendus ac de-  
 siderandus est, ut exemplar ævi prioris. — Amisimus vita-  
 nostræ Rectorem, amisimus Ducem, & vereor ne posthac ne-  
 gligentius vivamus. Plin.*

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**D**VM numerat doctam renitens Ecclesia protem,  
 Totque videt sanctos undique læta Patres;  
 Dum depressa jacet nec concutit Hæresis arma,  
 Opprimit, heu! subitus gaudia tantæ dolor!  
 Cessit RATTRAIUS fatœ; RATTRAIUS ille,  
 Quem timuere hastæ, quem coluere boni.

*Ille idem Praefulque pius, Pastorque fidelis;*

*Ille antiquorum talis imago Patrum.*

*Quo nec candidior, nec munificentior alter;*

*Vir sine fastu humilis, Vir sine fraude probus.*

*Illum nulla lucri spes subdola, nullus avarum*

*Ambitus ex recto tramite flexit opum.*

*Nec favit rigidis incaute partibus actus,*

*Prodere nec voluit pacis amore D E U M.*

*Hei mihi qualis erat! — Quantum integratatis in illo!*

*Quanta animi probitas! — Quantus in ore pudor!*

*Ut majestatis decus in sermone resulst!*

*Ut fuit antiquâ simplicitate nitens!*

*Illum habuit validum CHRISTI doctrina Patronum:*

*RATTRÆO emicuit Vindice tuta Fides.*

*Nec potuere pios fallacia rumpere cætus*

*Dogmata, nec vecors error habere locum.*

*Floruit, expulso, nitidæ concordia frontis.*

*Schismate: florebat pax & amica quies.*

*Quam studuit placide rudibus prodeesse docendo!*

*Quam fuit assiduus commonuisse leves!*

*Nec puduit leges veterum didicisse piorum:*

*Noverat illæsus sœcula prima labor.*

*Hausit & ignotos fontes, & origine purâ*

*Legerat antiqui quæ docuere Patres;*

*Et*

Et ritus, moresque sacros, præceptaque Cleri,  
Sparsaque per varios facta vetusta libros.  
Ipse oris sacri rediit Cyprianus in illum:  
Heu quando invenient sæcla futura parem!  
Quà patet occiduos inter Caledonia montes,  
Inter aestivi littora cana maris;  
Claruerat totum virtus pietasque per orbem,  
Claruerat docti nomen ubique Patris.  
Tandem Parca cito rapuit funesta sepulcro:  
Heu! quas perdidimus morte laboris opes!  
Dum gemit immites Ecclesia fracta tyrannos,  
Dum quatunt puram schismata fœda Fidem,  
RATTRÆUM pia progenies deflebit ademptum:  
Flebunt extinctum turba paterna Senum.

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Heu Pietas! — Heu prisca Fides!  
Reverendo Domino —  
Amico carissimio, mœrenti, animitùs  
roganti, mœrens inscribit —  
Eccl. Scot. direptæ & ge-  
mentis Presbyter L — d — is.

On the DEATH  
Of the truly worthy, and much lamented PRELATE,

Dr. *Thomas Rattray*,

Bishop of *EDINBURGH*,

Who died before Noon upon Ascension-day, May 12. 1743.

**A**ND is it so?—Is then great RATTRAY gone?  
That sacred Name, so dear to ev'ry one!  
And shall my Muse in pensive Sadness mourn,  
Nor drop one Tear in Publick o'er his Urn?  
Or must I still deplore the sudden Fate  
With silent Plaint, and sink beneath the Weight?

ILLUSTRIOS SHADE! could but my Eyes o'erflow  
With Floods of Tears, to weep the publick Woe;  
Could I but sing, as I admire thy Fame,  
And suit my Numbers to the mournful Theme;  
(Sad Theme, but just) I'd tune my drooping Lays,  
And sing and weep, and weep and sing thy Praise:  
Thy Virtues should in lasting Trophies shine,  
And Ages read their Loss in ev'ry Line:  
Beyond thy Dust thy Merit should survive,  
And, ev'n in Death, thy NAME for ever live.

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But here, my Muse, such diff'rent Scenes appear,  
 Each Virtue first demands the falling Tear.  
 His Christian Soul with what Devotion fir'd!  
 What pious Thoughts his gen'rous Breast inspir'd!  
 How wisely chequer'd his yet early Youth  
 With manly Pleasures, and a Love of Truth!  
 Not lost in vain Pursuits, nor idly spent  
 In serious Trifles, or gay Discontent;  
 But graver Cares, and Studies more sublime,  
 Refin'd his Judgment, and improv'd his Time.  
 The ancient Fathers all his Thoughts engrost;  
 When forc'd from them, each Hour was so much lost:  
 His boundless Soul exhausted o'er and o'er  
 These precious Mines, and longing wept for more.  
 Whate'er he argued, they before enjoin'd;  
 These dear Companions of so vast a Mind!  
 " This Rule old J E R O M E long before approv'd,  
 " That nicer Point the great St. B A S I L mov'd."  
 Beyond Corruption's Rise his Studies reach'd,  
 And back to Truth's untainted Ages stretch'd.  
 What wise Decrees the earliest Councils fram'd:  
 Ere Party-breaches were so much as nam'd,  
 Canons, and Rites, and universal Laws,  
 Vouch'd what he taught, and still maintain'd his Cause:  
 Still they supported what he said or did;  
 By them he voted, and by them forbid.

N O R only they deserv'd his boundless View,  
 Ev'n modern Disputes his Attention drew:  
 When ancient Truths in dismal Fetters lay,  
 To foreign Errors a resistles Prey,  
 Th' undaunted Heroe in the Field appear'd,  
 Prudent, tho' bold, at once belov'd and fear'd.  
 With Skill profound, and Penetration keen,  
 His piercing Soul discover'd Flaws unseen.  
 No far-fetch'd Quirk, nor Cunning without Sense,  
 Could shift the Stroke, or form a sham Defence.  
 All subtile Tricks he gen'rously disdain'd,  
 With Judgment argu'd, and with Candour gain'd:  
 The vanquish'd Foe, ashame'd so soon to yield,  
 In dire Disgrace gave o'er, and left the Field.  
 None could oppose him, and their Success boast.  
 Ah, what a Champion has Truth's Party lost!

A N D now, my Muse, thy narrower Song enlarge,  
 View him intrusted with his weighty Charge;  
 View him in priestly Robes above the Throng,  
 Serving his G O D with Reasons close and strong.  
 The Laick-crowd in lower Benches gaze,  
 Admire his Force, and silent speak his Praise:  
 Nor only barren Flights and Turns of Art  
 Mov'd their Affections, and inflam'd the Heart;

His common Life enforc'd whate'er he said;  
 In Truth he preach'd, in Love his Flock obey'd:  
 'Twas one continued Scene of doing good,  
 By all approv'd, rever'd and understood.  
 Smoothly he check'd the Levities of Youth,  
 And drest in taking Garb th' unwelcome Truth.  
 His mild Reproofs at once both cut and cur'd;  
 In Patience all his harshest Frowns endur'd.  
 None rashly flinch'd beneath the galling Yoke:  
 All heard, and all rever'd what RATTRAY spoke.

VIEW him next mounted on the Prelate's Throne,  
 And great in all Mens Eyes, except his own.  
 What gentle Softness his grave Looks display'd!  
 His sacred Pow'r with how much Mildness sway'd!  
 His sage Decisions all the Clergy heard;  
 'Twas RATTRAY's Judgment, and, as such, rever'd.  
 Strifes and Contentions, such as Parties raise  
 From Views of Int'rest, or Desire of Praise,  
 These he silenc'd; no more Divisions rag'd;  
 No more in Tumults factious Sides engag'd:  
 To foreign Climes these hideous Monsters fled;  
 RATTRAY but spoke, and all the Storm was laid.

FROM where the Sun his Morning-beams displays,  
 To where he dips at Night his setting Rays,

O'er

O'er SCOTLAND'S Plains his Fame extensive ran; <sup>His</sup>  
 All knew, or wish'd to know, th' ILLUSTRIOUS MAN;  
 Ev'n they, who, lost from Truth's unerring Road,<sup>awt</sup>  
 Disown'd the CHURCH, yet dar'd t' acknowledge GOD;  
 Ev'n they admir'd his venerable Name,<sup>Spoken by</sup>  
 And prais'd those Virtues which they durst not blame. <sup>Spoken by</sup>

At last he fell! — Heav'n gave the mournful Call,  
 By none expected, but bewail'd by all.  
 With cheerful Smiles he sat'd approaching Death,  
 Compos'd his Thoughts, and, calm, resign'd his Breath.  
 His pious Soul o'er ALBION'S Troubles wept,  
 Then, undisturb'd, he blest his GOD, and slept.  
 While direful Broils th' afflicted Nation rend,  
 And factious Fools for trifling Whims contend,  
 Succeeding Years shall our Misfortune know,  
 And the sad Loss to Childrens Children flow.

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TO

*James Rattray of Craighall, Esquire,*

This Attempt to embalm the sacred Memory of the best  
 of FATHERS of whatever kind, is humbly inscrib'd,



with much Sincerity  
 and deep Concern, by

THE AUTHOR.